Supply Shortage Alert: BD Bactec Blood Culture Bottles

Situation – There is a severe global shortage of BD Bactec Blood Culture media bottles.

Background –
- The supply shortage is due to a raw material (plastic) shortage.
- The shortage is expected to last many months (through fall 2024). There is significant uncertainty about future supplies.
- UCHealth is seeing >50% reduction in supply allocation from distributors.
- Failure to conserve supplies immediately may result in a critical shortage.

Assessment – Running out of blood culture media bottles will prevent the diagnosis of bloodstream infections (bacteremia, fungemia, etc). Implementing conservation measures is required to maintain institutional supply, and rationing may be required in the near future.

Recommendation –
- Do not draw ‘hold’ blood cultures, only draw cultures if orders are placed. Do not draw blood cultures as part of a ‘rainbow’.
- Do not draw more than two sets of blood cultures in a 48-hour time frame per patient. If more than two sets of blood culture orders are received, escalate to leadership.
- Adhere to proper collection techniques including skin disinfection and proper fill levels to prevent repeat cultures.
- Providers are receiving instruction to only order blood cultures that are medically necessary and implement strategies to conserve blood culture media bottles for patients at the highest risk.